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HEALTH PROBLEMS AND HEALTH CARE AMONG ADULT RESIDENTS OF NORTH CAROLINA'S HEALTH SERVICE AREAS

Known as the North Carolina Citizen Survey (NCCS), a sample survey conducted by the North Carolina Department of Administration during September and October of 1976 provides data related to the health and economic characteristics of the state's household population (1-4). Details concerning the survey design and methodology have been reported (1). Briefly, a stratified random sample with proportional allocation was selected from 1975 state income tax returns and 1975 listings of residents eligible for Medicaid assistance. A representative cross-section of adults was then questioned by telephone or in-person interview. Altogether, the sampling frame included approximately 96 percent of the household count estimated for 1973, and the final sample involved 1,385 households, each with a single respondent.

The representativeness of the statewide sample is discussed elsewhere (1). Generally, differences between estimates obtained in the survey and other independent estimates were not large although the possibility of some bias towards overrepresentation of urban households and lower-income households should be considered. Also, the survey appears to underrepresent adult males by about 3.5 percent.

This report purports to highlight survey results with respect to questions concerning the health and health care of households and adults in each of North Carolina's six Health Service Areas (HSA's). These data were tabulated by the Division of State Budget and Management in the Department of Administration. Other summary data generated by Budget and Management and reported elsewhere (3,4) are also discussed.

Except where the number of respondents (N) is given in the tables, results are based on approximately 1,380 responses distributed according to the following HSA totals: Western (229), Piedmont (270), Southern Piedmont (262), Capital (179), Cardinal (190), Eastern (251). In the computation of percentages, unknown and missing values generally have not been allocated to a response category, i.e., they are included in the denominator.

Population Characteristics

In synthesizing results of the survey, one should be aware of various demographic differences among the HSA's. These include greater rurality, lower incomes, older ages, and fewer high school graduates in the Western, Cardinal and Eastern HSA's; higher frequencies of nonwhites in the Capital, Eastern and Cardinal HSA's; and a higher frequency of females in the Eastern HSA.

Chronic Health Problems

Among the adult household population of North Carolina, NCCS findings show that nearly 7% had trouble getting around freely, about 32% had been told by a doctor that they had one or more of eight chronic diseases, and about 10% reported symptoms of some neurological disorder. Circulatory and musculoskeletal impairments were the